NCA
VOC FOR IOP/FN
BACKGROUNDER NO. 5-5444 JANUARY 13, 1978
LARRY LESUEUR

FOCUS: AMBASSADOR ROBERT MURPHY.

ANNCR:

FORMER AMBASSADOR ROBERT MURPHY, A DIPLOMAT FOR 40 YEARS AND ADVISOR TO FOUR U.S. PRESIDENT, IS DEAD AT AGE 83. VOA'S LARRY LESUEUR LOOKS BACK ON MR. MURPHY'S DISTINGUISHED CAREER.

VOICE:

ROBERT MURPHY'S ABILITIES WON HIM AN ALMOST UNPARALLED OPPORTUNITY TO WITNESS HISTORY BEING MADE AND TO PARTICIPATE IN ITS MAKING. AS A PROFESSIONAL DIPLOMAT, MR. MURPHY BECAME REKNOWNED AS A PRACTIONER OF "QUIET DIPLOMACY." HIS 40-YEAR-CAREER IN THE AMERICAN FOREIGN SERVICE CULMINATED IN HIS APPOINTMENT TO THE TOP U.S. STATE DEPARTMENT CAREER POST....THAT OF UNDERSECRETARY OF STATE.

SON OF A RAILROAD WORKER, MR. MURPHY BECAME A SKILLED SHORTHAND REPORTER BEFORE ENTERING THE FOREIGN SERVICE IN 1917. HE STUDIED FOR A LAW DEGREE AT NIGHT. THE TALL, STOOP-SHOULDERED MR. MURPHY WAS A CONSULAR OFFICIAL IN MUNICH, GERMANY DURING THE RISE OF ADOLPH HITLER. AS CONSUL IN PARIS IN 1940, HE MET WITH THE GERMAN COMMANDER TO PROTECT AMERICAN AND FRENCH INTERESTS. THEN, AS U.S. CHARGE D'AFFAIRS IN VICHY, FRANCE, HE WAS INSTRUCTED BY FORMER U.S. PRESIDENT FRANKLIN ROOSEVELT TO OPEN THE SECRET NEGOTIATIONS IN ALGIERS THAT PAVED THE WAY FOR THE VIRTUALLY UNOPPOSED U.S. LANDINGS IN NORTH AFRICA.

SOME AMERICANS CRITICIZED WHAT THEY CALLED HIS "DEAL" WITH THE VICHY REPRESENTATIVE IN ALGIERS. ADMIRAL JEAN DARLAN, BUT MR. MURPHY WAS LATER AWARDED THE DISTINGUISHED SERVICE CROSS FOR HIS WORK IN NORTH AFRICA. FROM 1942 TO THE END OF WORLD

WAR TWO, HE WAS GENERAL EISENHOWER'S CHIEF POLITICAL ADVISOR. HE FLEW INTO CAPTURED ROME IN JUNE OF 1944 TO DELIVER A LETTER FROM PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT TO POPE PIUS THE TWELFTH. LATER HE TOOK PART IN SECRET NEGOTIATIONS TO KEEP YUGOSLAVIA IN THE WESTERN CAMP AND MET WITH THE YUGOSLAV PARTISAN LEADER AT HIS WARTIME HEADQUARTERS. DURING THE BERLIN BLOCKADE OF 1948, MR. MURPHY WAS POLITICAL ADVISOR TO GENERAL LUCIUS CLAY, MILITARY GOVERNOR OF THE AMERICAN ZONE OF GERMANY

AS THE FIRST POST-WAR U.S. AMBASSADOR TO TOKYO, AMBASSADOR MURPHY HELPED NEGOTIATE AN END TO THE FIGHTING IN KOREA. IN 1958, HE WAS SENT TO BEIRUT, LEBANON, WHERE HE WAS ON HAND WHEN 7,000 AMERICAN MARINES LANDED AT THE REQUEST OF PRESIDENT CAMILLE CHAMOUN IN AN INTERNAL CRISIS THAT THREATENED THE PEACE OF THE MIDDLE EAST.

AFTER HIS RETIREMENT AS U.S. UNDERSECRETARY OF STATE MR. MURPHY BECAME AN EXECUTIVE OF THE CORNING GLASS WORKS AND PUBLISHED HIS MEMOIRS UNDER THE TITLE "DIPLOMAT AMONG WARRIORS."

AMBASSADOR MURPHY RECEIVED MANY AWARDS AND DECORATIONS, INCLUDING THE U.S. NATIONAL SECURITY MEDAL. THE CITATION PRESENTED WITH THE MEDAL DESCRIBED HIM AS "A MAN OF LEGENDARY ACHIEVEMENT IN THE CAUSE OF FREEDOM."

JS/PY